847 To cause abortion, the root is mashed to obtain
278 the juice. The latter is strained and taken
mixed in a liter of water. *Gobernadorcillo* is
[844] also taken to accelerate the birth if it should
be slow.

One midwife purges barren women with the
842 bulb of the white lily. Two or three bulbs are
278 used; they are cooked and strained, and the
juice given. Three days after the purge, the
patient is bathed and "given a sweat" with
cooking oil and ground salt rubbed all over the
body. This cure is given during the time of
menstruation to "clear" the blood. This cures
the "coldnesses" of the patient or causes the
harmful elements to be discharged. One
patient now has four children. Another, barren
10 years before treatment, now has two children.

Involuntary abortions also occur. Pregnant
847 mothers are often fearful of this and sometimes
will not go to curers when they are ill for fear
they will be given a medicine which will cause
abortion. A woman in her eighth month of
pregnancy who was suffering fever and spitting
blood refused to go to the curer for fear of
being given abortive drugs. Drinking is be-
lieved to cause many abortions, and heavy work,
such as lifting a log while helping to build a
fence, is recognized as a possible cause of abor-
tion. If the mother "likes something too
much," for example, a horse or a kind of food,
the child may be born prematurely, but appar-
ently may live. Solar eclipses are likewise
[821] believed to cause early births. The midwife is
sometimes called if abortion is feared. One
midwife anoints the coccyx and abdomen with
the white of an egg (which has been beaten on
the ground) and also with lard and oil. An-
other midwife gives the flower of maize, tomato
peel, a shoot of verbena, and a potsherd of
Guadalajara ware. The potsherd is ground
and the whole made into an infusion. This is
taken twice and the coccyx and abdomen are
rubbed with the white of an egg beaten on the
ground.

Some people believe that the first child takes
● 843 9 months to mature, while the subsequent chil-
dren take only 8 months. While women do not
keep exact count of the period between
menstruations, they have a pretty accurate idea
of the proper interval, and pregnancy is recog-
nized when menstruation fails to occur. Lassi-
tude, heaviness, and loss of appetite are con-

1:Beals E-6 (1940-1941)1946 NU34 Tarasco NU34
[p. 166]

843 sidered frequent symptoms also. Sometimes in the early months women are sick at their stomachs and vomit in the mornings.

Usually a midwife is sought early in pregnancy and pays frequent visits to the enceinte woman. The midwife massages the woman with lard or cooking oil "to make sure the foetus is in the right position" and generally keeps an eye on the patient's health. Sometimes the midwife locates the head of the child during the massage. A fee of 10 centavos is charged for each visit.

A pregnant woman should not do much work, should not lift heavy things, and should take frequent baths in cold water in the house. She continues to grind corn and carry water; young mothers, indeed, are encouraged to keep active by older women, who believe some exercise helps the mother. She does not cook tortillas if she can avoid it, because the fire might "cook" the foetus. Toward the end of pregnancy some women are "delicate" and eat very little. At Capacuaro this is customary in the last days of pregnancy. Otherwise there are no prenatal food taboos.

843 An eclipse during pregnancy may cause
821 something bad to happen to the child. To
[789] prevent the effects, a red belt is worn underneath the several belts worn by women who dress in traditional costume. If Mestizo costume is worn, red underwear is used. Women should do nothing during an eclipse. The
[144] occurrence of Mongoloid spot is reported. It is believed that this is caused by the woman carrying her coins in the customary fashion in her belt during pregnancy.

843 Women should not tie any animals during pregnancy, as this may cause the child to be strangled by the umbilical cord during birth. If the mother urinates where some animal has urinated, the child may be born with some part of the animal. Reports were given by midwives of children having been born with a pig face or a goat face and tail because the mother urinated where these animals had urinated. In the latter part of pregnancy a woman should always remove the lid from a vessel before lifting it from the fire; if she fails to observe this rule, the child may be born dumb. Clubfoot is caused by the mother not taking proper care of herself.

1:Beals E-5 (1940-1941)1946 NU34 Tarasco NU34
Sierra Tarascans
[p. 65b]

845 Wrong positions, especially breech presentations, may result from several causes. The mother may have moved around too much and worked too hard, hit a dog with her foot, put the "foot" of a stick of wood in the fire first, failed to remove the *comal* from the fire immediately after finishing the cooking of tortillas, eaten toasted tortillas, or eaten off the metate (the latter taboo was explained on the basis that the metate has only three legs). Children are born blind only because "God wills it."

Witches may interfere with pregnancy and make the child arrive dead. The preventive [789] remedy is to cook tomato peeling and a potsherd of Guadalajara ware together and drink the liquid.

843 Fathers are also under some restrictions during the period of pregnancy. Whenever a load of wood is brought to the house it must be untied immediately or the child may be strangled by the umbilical cord. Also, the father must not kill lizards or snakes during the pregnancy, or touch resin or turpentine, or they will enter into the child. Some say the father should not kill any kind of an animal, from a snail to an ox. If he does so, the animal will enter into the child through the mouth or nose and the child will be born dead. One midwife thought the father should not have relations with his wife after the third or fourth month of pregnancy for reasons of cleanliness, but some say difficult birth or wrong positions may result from continued intercourse. The father should not work on the day of birth.

844 No distinction is made between first and subsequent births. Midwives varied in their ideas as to the frequency of births. Some believed [842] that women had children from 1 to 1½ years apart, others said from 8 months to 3 years. One midwife explained that the number of children and the frequency of births were determined by something resembling links in the uterus. These could be counted by the midwife, who could tell how many children the woman would have and, by the spacing, what the interval between births would be. Some women might be capable of as many as 25 pregnancies.

All births are attended by midwives, who form a professional group, although without